

July, 1945.

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TOC H

WAR SERVICE

NEWS SHEET



The need for Toc H Services Clubs in this country is gradually ceasing to exist, and consequently many are being closed. In the last six months over one hundred Clubs have given their farewell parties and closed their doors for the first time, some of them, for six years. It is anticipated that many more will close before the end of 1945. These Services Clubs have served their purpose of providing a home-like atmosphere and a warmth of welcome to the hundreds of thousands of serving men and women of the British Empire and our Allies, who have visited them. The Wardens, Staff and voluntary helpers who braved the hazards of bombing to keep open house for the Services, and who worked tirelessly and ceaselessly in that spirit of Christian fellowship and service which is Toc H, have found their reward in the many new friends they have made, who write from all parts of the world remembering the happiness they found at the Clubs. A letter of thanks from the Joint Permanent Secretary of State for War, is reprinted here:

"From Sir Frederick C. Bovenschen, K.C.B., K.B.E.,
Joint Permanent under-Secretary of State for War.

The War Office,
S.W.1.

29th May, 1945.

On the occasion of the end of the war in Europe the Army Council, with whom the Board of Admiralty and the Air Council have desired to be associated, wish to express to you the gratitude of all three Services for the generous assistance which you and all your helpers have given in the long and difficult years which have passed since the outbreak of war.

The work of voluntary societies, whether for the men themselves through canteens, libraries, comforts or other welfare services, or for their families, has meant a very great deal to soldiers, sailors and airmen and to those dependent on them; and, by adding to their well-being and happiness, has made a direct contribution to the winning of the war in Europe. It has been done largely by men and women who, after performing their ordinary duties in office, factory or home, have given up their leisure to perform a voluntary service, often under conditions of discomfort and danger. But whether the work has been done by full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid, staff it has been uniformly carried out with cheerfulness and goodwill that have won the respect and gratitude of all Service men and women.

On behalf of all three Services I am to thank Toc H and to ask you to convey this message to all your staff and helpers. Let us now all go forward till the final Victory is achieved."

Meanwhile, Toc H Services Clubs are still being opened where they are required.

News comes from the Channel Islands of a Club at 43a, High Street, St. Peter Port, GUERNSEY. John Buckingham reports that after the German Forces had taken the Islands, Toc H asked permission from the Commandant to carry on the Toc H meeting, held regularly at 43a High Street, but was given strict instructions to close down. A few meetings were held in private houses but these, too, were soon stopped. But the spirit of Toc H did not die and members did what they could in the way of service to others, while the years dragged by—years in which, as John Buckingham puts it "we realised to the full what England and Freedom really mean." At long last came VE day and with it the liberation of the Channel Islands, when British soldiers landed, and Toc H came out of enforced hiding, and on Wednesday, the 16th May, 1945, at 8 p.m., Toc H Guernsey called its first meeting for nearly five years. One of the immediate results of that meeting was the setting up of a Forces Rest Room, which soon developed into a Services Club proper. The Club, whose windows overlook the harbour of St. Peter Port, with a lovely view of the Islands of Herm, Sark and Jersey, has two main rooms, one of which is a recreation room, with table tennis, billiards and bagatelle, and the other a

rest room equipped with easy chairs and writing tables. In this room there is a stage, and every Wednesday evening special entertainments are put on for the Services. The weekly Toc H meetings are held there, too, preceded by a brief talk on Toc H, and an invitation to those interested to come to the meeting. Adjoining the rest room is the canteen, where at first all water had to be boiled on a primus stove, and great care had to be exercised to make the weekly rations stretch to provide a cup of tea and a slice of bread and butter or three biscuits per person. Upstairs is the traditional Upper Room—the Chapel. Every evening between 6 and 10 p.m., some one hundred Services men use the Club, ably looked after by a voluntary staff of members of Toc H and the Women's Section. If you have any spare magazines, will you send them to Toc H Guernsey? To John Buckingham, at 43a, High Street, St. Peter Port.

In N.W. EUROPE, as reported in last month's News Sheet, some of the Clubs are no longer needed. St. Omer is closed; Malines will probably be closed by the time this is printed; de Haan is closing for the excellent reason that the flow of convalescent wounded has ceased; and Uccle, outside Brussels, will close in time for the next school term. The Education Authorities are anxious to have the premises, a girls' school, returned to them.

In occupied GERMANY, the Club at Suchteln has moved on to BAD SALZUFLEN, while the one that was at NIENBURG has re-opened in HANOVER.

A Toc H Services Club has been opened in the small university town of GOTTINGEN. The British War Relief Society of America is taking a particular interest in this Club, presenting pictures, reading matter and games. The University of Gottingen is to be re-opened soon for the use of the 1,400—2,000 troops stationed in the neighbourhood. There are no other facilities for relaxation apart from the Toc H Services Club, and Harvey Morland, Toc H Staff man in charge, is anxious that the Club shall not be lacking in anything that will contribute to the welfare of the men who use it. Here again, we have been asked to collect for the Club; books and periodicals on Music and the Arts are in particular demand, also books of reference. If you can spare any, please send them to Toc H Headquarters, 47, Francis Street, S.W.1, marked "Gottingen."

Toc H has been asked by the Authorities to open a Services Club in NORWAY, and Arthur Edgar, Toc H Commissioner for N.W. Europe, last week flew from Brussels, via London, to Oslo, taking staff men Charles Young and Andrew Tennant with him.

In INDIA AND S.E.A.C. with the continued prosecution of the war against Japan, there is need for more Toc H Services Clubs and mobiles. There are at present 18 Clubs and mobile centres. The latest Clubs to open have been Rangoon and Maymyo. Money is required for the establishing, running and staffing of the Clubs and mobiles, and we at home are organising money-raising functions to provide the necessary funds. In Pontypool, on June 22nd, Lady Mary Herbert formally opened a Jungle Exhibition to launch Monmouthshire's £10,000 appeal for Toc H welfare work in S.E.A.C. A bit of Burma has been brought to Monmouthshire. In what was Pontypool Home Guard Company's H.Q. and Drill Hall, there is now an exact replica of a Toc H rest camp in Burma, and, in direct contrast, a most realistic Jungle, with swamps, tangled jungle growth and authentic jungle noises of birds, beasts and insects. All this has been constructed (with the blessing of the War Office, and particularly Major-General Richards, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., Director of Clothing and Stores) by Major Cane, Sergeant Jeffery, N.C.O.'s and men of the R.A.O.C. Thirty tons of earth made the jungle "floor"; 20 lorry-loads of natural foliage supplemented enormous quantities of artificial foliage and trees sent down from London. Life-size figures of soldiers wade waist-deep through water, cook meals in jungle clearings, man 4.2 mortars, and attack Jap pill-boxes. This exciting Exhibition is only part of ambitious plans of Monmouthshire to collect the £10,000 which is their target. The County Police, headed by Chief Constable Major W. R. Lucas, have made a special contribution to the fund. The employees of the firm of John Lysaght Ltd., Newport, have promised to contribute from their holiday pay, the men 2/- each and the women and juvenile workers 1/- each, and the total will be doubled by the employers. Many A.R.P. posts have made collections and all over the County events of all kinds are being organised and supported by the people of Monmouthshire who are anxious to do everything in their power to help Toc H bring some measure of comfort and relaxation to the men still fighting in S.E.A.C.

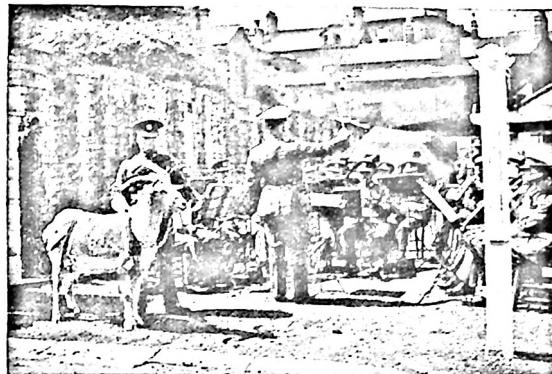
The photographs in black and white on the opposite page cannot do justice to the very colourful exhibition. Pictures 2 and 3 show part of an extensive mural decoration which conveys with startling reality an impression of brilliant sunshine on blue waters. (The mural was painted by Sgt. Jeffery in a little under 5 hours!) The interior of the rest camp is a faithful replica of the type of static Club provided by Toc H in Burma. Visitors to the Exhibition have had the opportunity of studying the equipment, weapons, medical supplies, rations and clothing of the fighting men in Burma, shown as a Special Section.

Mrs. G. Nicholl,
47, Francis Street,
London, S.W.1.

TOC H REST CAMP AND BURMA JUNGLE IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.



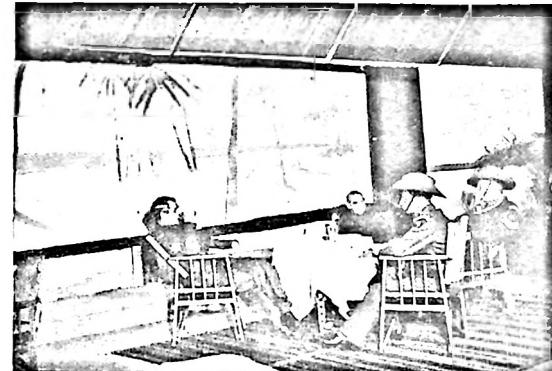
Col. J. C. A. Birch, D.S.O., Lady Mary Herbert,
Maj.-Gen. J. G. Halsted, C.B., O.B.E., M.C.



The Band of the Welch Regiment, Goatmajor Clarke and
"Taffy," the Regimental Mascot, at the Opening Ceremony.



Sgt. J. Smith and Sgt. N. Scott, of the 19th "Dagger" Division, visit the Rest Camp.



Toc H Rest Camp on the shores of the Bay of Bengal—in Pontypool.



In the Jungle. Life-size figures of Fighting Men amongst tropical vegetation.



Lady Mary Herbert discovers bananas and monkeys, as well as soldiers, in the Jungle.

AND NOW—TOC H POST-WAR!

WAR SERVICE REMAINS.—The major war in Europe is won—but peace is still a long way off. In the Far East enormous and increasing effort for a long time may be needed before the Japanese are beaten, as they must be. Nearer home the Armies of Occupation are taking up their stations—for how many years of duty? At home Demobilisation is going to be a long and difficult process. Millions of men and women cannot yet exchange uniform for 'civvies.' In other words, the 'War Service' of Toc H to the three fighting Services is still urgently called for and must be maintained. We are confident that many of the friends who have so long stood by this work will help to maintain it for a while longer.

PEACE-MAKING.—Peace has to be made, and, as we already see, it is as difficult and dangerous a task as making war; it is likely to take a good deal longer. In this peace-making world, so confusing to the plain man and woman, Toc H has its part to play. Born in the first World War, Toc H was tried out—and not found wanting—by thousands of men and women for twenty years of peace before World War No. 2. For Toc H is a way of thinking and living, and the Clubs and Canteens of Toc H in all theatres of war during the last six years are a natural outcome of that way. They are only one of the jobs Toc H has done; they are not Toc H itself.

WHAT IS OUR REAL AIM?—Toc H is a peace-maker. Its true job is, and always has been, making peace—in other words, bringing people to know each other and, in company with each other, to seek and do God's will. Its method is as simple as possible. Friendship is the aim—and men can't be friends if they don't meet. The little local Branch of Toc H (there were 1,500 of them for men and some hundreds for women, in every Continent, before the war) brings people together regularly. It does not regard differences of race, class, income, education, political opinion or Christian conviction as obstacles; it enjoys them and uses them as a rich variety of contributions to the common stock of the Toc H 'family.' This mixture can only be kept sweet by a strong foundation of faith, by much give-and-take and a lively sense of humour. But the effort is well worth making. If nations would make it, in the same spirit, would another world war be conceivable?

WHAT IS OUR WORK?—Toc H brings people together by Service. It builds up little teams of friends—but a team has no meaning unless it plays a game. The game of Toc H is playing "the good neighbour," or, in more formal words, voluntary social service to the community in any direction where opportunity opens a way. The directions already have been legion—from Scouting to serving on the Town Council, from digging an invalid's garden on a Saturday afternoon to years of service in a Leper colony.

Let us be outspoken about the motive underlying Friendship and Service in Toc H. This is not spare-time amusement or mere 'philanthropy.' It is based much deeper, on the Christian conviction that this is the kind of way in which God means men and women to live and work together.

WHAT NEXT?—With its younger members away on active service and their elders at home busy with war work, Toc H has been hard put to it to keep its Branch life going, but in most cases has succeeded. Now the young members are coming back, bringing with them a great reinforcement of new men and women who have met Toc H for the first time in our Services Clubs, in "Circles" on board ship or in the desert, or in Prisoner of War camps. Their eagerness to join the 'family' and begin work with it is beyond doubt. And their work will be to help build, in whatever way they can, that better world for all, of which so much has been said, so little yet done.

BUILDERS ALL.—There is also, we hope and believe, another big reinforcement to the life and work of Toc H coming from among those who have steadily and generously backed its war work, not only with their money but with their minds and hearts. We need the same help and understanding now for new jobs—the tasks of peace, no less urgent than those of war.

When the war broke out Toc H decided to stake all it had on War Service, to 'go broke' if need be, in the doing of a job which challenged it. Now that peace is breaking out Toc H faces old tasks and great new opportunities with the same determination and with most inadequate means. Members are giving what they can, often more than they can, and they are sure that many others will stand by them as Toc H Builders.

If anyone who reads this page would like to know more, literature and particulars of the "Toc H Builders" scheme, already well established, will gladly be supplied by the Builders' Secretary, Toc H Headquarters, 47, Francis Street, London, S.W.1.

Barclay Baron, Editor of the *Toc H Journal*.